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# ANTI-SLAVERY MONTHLY REPORTER.

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## *BERBICE—Fiscal's Returns, printed by order of the House of Commons, 23rd June, 1825.*

THE Fiscal, Mr. Bennet, in transmitting these returns, observes, that until the year 1819, he had kept no minutes of the complaints of slaves : but that from that time he had taken minutes of his examinations, but only in a few cases of his decisions. Since the present application was made for copies of the complaints, he has been more particular in receiving them, and he has added the decisions. The account embraces a period from February 1819 to November 1823.

Under all these disadvantages, the materials before us are, nevertheless, very valuable. They admit us into the interior, the very pentalia of the slave system, which they exhibit in all its height and length and breadth and depth of deformity. It is out of our power, however, to do more than select a few examples from the mass.

The first complaint on the list, we are sorry to say, is against a lady, Mrs. Sanders. Nine Negro men, on the 1st of February, 1819, complain of a great want both of food and clothing. One man produces a bolt and shackles, with which the Negro women were often confined, the ancles and wrists crossways, by which they are bent double; and says he was twice confined in that way himself. He and three others went on one occasion to complain of hunger. Mrs. Sanders ordered them to be tied down and flogged with two drivers. It was on a Sunday: supposes he had sixty. They are made to reap cassava, and get firewood every Sunday, till the greatest part of the day is spent. The women and children have no allowance; and the men are obliged to share their allowance, which is also a very scanty one, with them. These charges are denied by the lady. They are in part admitted, but in part denied, by her overseer. The Fiscal's judgment is not given. (pp. 5—8.)

On the 18th of August, 1820, the same lady again appears before the Fiscal. The following is a transcript of his minute of the complaints preferred by her slaves:—

"Negro Sam says, that his mistress is very bad; that the work is daily increased, so that they are unable to perform their task given them: That the last holidays, when they got three days to dance at home, their mistress obliged them to work so hard afterwards as to complete the work lost in the dancing days: That his wife, named Adjuba, was locked up lately in his mistress's house for six days, her allowance being only one plaintain daily, complainant exhibiting some of their

plantains, and that the very pot in which she got water to drink, was to serve her, by her mistress's order, as a *necessaire*: That his young master is very good, but his mistress is of too cruel a nature: that his allowance is very little, and that they get no clothing at all scarce. Finally, begs that he may be sold elsewhere, as he is not able to bear it any longer there.

— Negro *Louisy* says, Mr. Hyneman bought him when very young, and sold him to Mr. Sanders; that from both of these masters he never was ill-treated; but since the death of Mr. Sanders, his mistress treats them with cruel barbarity sometimes; that every Negro is obliged to bring home twelve bunches of shingles, although other Negroes bring but six weekly. That their mistress keeps them the whole Sunday employed with all sorts of trifling works: that they get only three *sava cakes* a week, with a little bit of salt fish: Finally, that they get hardly any clothes;—wishes therefore rather to be sold than remain with such a cruel mistress; as certainly all of the Negroes one day or other, after so much suffering, will run away in the bush.

— Negro *David* says, that he is cow-minder to his mistress; that lately one of the cows got sick, for which his mistress ordered her driver to tie him up as fast as he could, which caused dislocation at the time, and under which he is still suffering, (complainant looking rather sickly, and having the marks of his flogging still visible on his posteriors;) that he there received 150 lashes from Andries by his mistress's order, who afterwards locked him up in the stocks in such a way, that both feet and hands were fastened; that his mistress says, because he is cow-minder she gives him no Sundays, neither any allowance whatsoever. Requests to be sold."

Mrs. Sanders appears before the Fiscal upon two other occasions in answer to similar complaints. On the last, 8th September, 1823. the following is the Fiscal's minute of the case:—

— Complaint of the Negro *David*, belonging to Mrs. Sanders:—"That he is too much punished with the whip and tamarind rods; that he is employed to work in the kitchen, garden, and also as cook; that he is swollen; the soles of his feet flogged with tamarind rods; that his mistress says he is lazy, which is the cause of his being flogged; he is flogged with the whip lately; he has a beating at his heart, the cause of his illness; his posteriors shew that he has been lately punished, but to any excess, but the punishment much neglected; soles of his feet examined, shew no marks of punishment; the Negro appears to be a dropsy, and as such is treated by the doctor who has charge of the barracks."

The son of this lady undertakes to defend his mother. He says—"that the Negro is a very bad character;—that

— "Little or no work is done by him, for on the least harsh word he runs away; he is a constant run-away. My mother will not allow him to be flogged, because *he bears the marks of former punishment very evidently*; he did receive a slight punishment for running away; this punishment was inflicted by two small boys with tamarind rods, and it was to endeavour to shame him. My brother brought him to town five days ago to cook, and why he has run away I do not know."

*he was flogged by said boys under his feet, with tamarind rods, on account of HIS BACK BEING CUT UP."*

"11th March, 1819.

"Plantation GELDERLAND:—*Nettelje, Julia, Lea, and Mietje*, each with an infant in arms, complain that no time is allowed them to nurse their children; that during the crop an equal quantity of coffee is expected and required of them as from other women having no children, or of the men; that a similar task is given in weeding grass with the rest of the gang, which they are not able to perform, in consequence of carrying their children on their backs; if they fail, they are beaten in the manager's presence with the handle of the whip by the driver Esperance. *Nettelje* and also *Mietje* were flogged the day before yesterday by the carpenter *La Fleur*; they, with others, were weeding the dam; they had made a fire to drive away the sand-flies; they were seen by *Mr. Toel*, the manager, suckling their infants; he inquired if they had no work to do: they replied, they had just taken their children up, who were crying; they were laid down and flogged; their coats were stained with blood. *Mr. Toel* took the fire up, and threw it in the trench. *Julia* was locked up in the stocks because she did not keep with the rest of the gang, and threatened to be flogged next morning: she is a young girl, with her first child. *Lea* complains that she is not allowed to suckle her child during her work; she was threatened to be flogged next day by *Mr. Toel*, at same time with *Julia*." (p. 13.)

"*Jane* belonging to *Mr. Bourmester*, says her master gave her to his housekeeper *Grace*, who is constantly abusing and ill-treating her; she is often in the habit of kicking her, and beating her with any thing that comes to hand, sometimes with the fire-stick; sometimes with a piece of wood. Monday morning she was sent by *Grace* to look for wood; when she returned she took a piece of crab-wood she had brought, and beat her with it, and kicked her. Her master was not at home: she got breakfast for her mistress and a gentleman, *Mr. Harvey*. After breakfast sent me for wood; I had just recovered from a fit of sickness, having had a blister on my belly, which was not yet healed; I felt faint, and was under the necessity of sitting down to recover myself. When I came home with the wood it was about 11 o'clock; as soon as I returned she began to beat and kick me, saying she hated to see me; a boy belonging to *Mr. De George*, named *Alexander*, saw when she beat me, and a girl named *Sophia*, belonging to *Sue Austerhem*." (p. 14.)

"Complaint of the woman *Minkie*, belonging to *Thomas C. Jones*:—Says, *Mr. Jones* took her out of the barracks on Tuesday; after I got home he sent me to *Mr. Henery*; he would not buy me. He sent me to another gentleman. I do not know his name, but he lives in town; they both said my master asked too much money for me, and sent me back. I begged for a pass to look for an owner; he said no, he would put me down and cut my -----, and would give me more than the law gives. I was then laid down, and tied to three stakes, and *Chance* flogged me with a cart-whip; I got a severe flogging; I saw *Mr. Layfield* at his door with another gentleman, and *Mr. Kerschmer*, the baker, saw it from his window. *Mr. Jones* bought me from *Mr. Logie*, of *Demerara*. I have marks of severe punishment visible on me, old and recent floggings, all inflicted by *Jones*.

"Exhibits her posterior, which are covered with a plaster, by order of the doctor, and appears lacerated to that degree, that the court judged it expedient to discover or not to uncover it." (p. 14)

Mr. Jones said he *had* flogged her, and broke her mouth for her insolence. He had thirty-nine blows on her, and *they were well inflicted*. When he sent for her, he had no intention of flogging her; but after sending her to three persons for sale, and not succeeding, he told her, she had often deserved a flogging; he then directed her to be flogged, and that they should be well laid on, which was done.

August 23, 1822.

"Felix belonging to Plantation Scotland, states,

"That he has had a Black woman upon the estate for his wife now two years; and the reason of his coming to complain is, that the manager of the estate takes her from him, although he has a wife of his own. He is always taking the Negroes' wives, particularly his wife Felix's;) for she has had a child for him, and since the child has been born, the manager is always punishing him and his wife without a cause. Some time ago ten of the gang came to complain to their master Dr. Broer, to report to him that the manager had connection with their wives; their master promised to them that he would remove the manager from the estate, and place another one there. Upon this promise the Negroes returned to the estate; but since that they have never heard of another manager. Felix and his wife are daily punished, which has compelled him to come to your Honour for redress. He calls upon the whole gang of the estate to prove his assertions to be correct.

"On hearing this complaint, the Acting Fiscal proceeded to the estate, accompanied by Dr. Broer, the owner; and on questioning the manager and Negroes, in presence of each other, on the subject-matter of the complaint, it appeared that Felix had neglected his work, and was told he would be punished if he did not finish his task the next day, which he did not do; and therefore supposing the manager would punish him he went to the Fiscal to complain. This being proved, *Felix was punished for his misconduct, and the manager severely reprimanded for taking improper liberties with the women on the estate, which it was evident he had done*; and Dr. Broer was therefore strongly recommended to discharge him from his employ." (p. 75.)

That *Felix* should be the person punished for misconduct, will appear very extraordinary to all who have not imbibed their notions of justice in slave colonies; and it is the more surprising that the fiscal should pursue this course in the present instance, as some time before he had addressed a letter to Governor Beard, then president of the court of justice, p. 15 in which he charges these very persons, Broer and his manager, specifically; first, with greatly overworking the Negroes; secondly, with severe flogging repeated on successive evenings, and with illegal instruments of punishment; thirdly, with making them work on Sunday; and fourthly, with considerably underfeeding them. The case was so gross that, notwithstanding an attempt on the part of the owner and manager to deny the charges, the fiscal ordered them to diminish the tasks of the Negroes, and to increase their food; forbade their being worked on Sunday; *threatened* the owner with prosecution,

and told the Negroes, if their wrongs were not redressed, they should complain again.

June 26, 1819.

Brutus, a watchman, belonging to plantation Providence, complained that "the manager wanted my daughter Peggy. I said, 'No.' He followed her. I said, 'No.' He asked her three times, I said, 'No.' Manager asked me again Friday night. I refused. Saturday morning he flogged me. This thing hurt me, and I came to complain."

"Peggy being sick, *Aqueshaba* her sister attended:—Says, that manager sent aunty Grace to call Peggy, and to say, if she would not come I must. We said, daddy said must not go; I was too young. Grace left us and went to daddy; shortly afterwards she returned and tried to coax me to go, but I would not, as my daddy had forbid it. Grace went and told manager; manager sent to call Fanny; Fanny went. The manager was up in his room; and all of us, the Creoles, got orders to be watchmen at manager's door. I was watchman, Peggy, Franky, and many more." (p. 30.)

The manager of this estate on another occasion (p. 80.) laid a Negro on the ground with two drivers over him, who gave him 100 lashes. His innocence being afterwards proved, he went to the manager for redress. The manager told him, "if you do not hold your tongue, I will put you in the stocks." He then went to his owner, Mr. Henry, who answered, "I cannot help it, it is not my fault, the punishment you had was the manager's fault." As he could get no redress from master or manager, he came to the fiscal. The manager endeavoured to justify himself, admitting that he had given him thirty-nine lashes, (the number allowed by law for any or for no offence,) and confined him in the stocks every night for a week. The fiscal *reprimanded* the manager for punishing a Negro on such slight grounds.

A number of Negroes belonging to Mr. Elwes complain (p. 17.) of the harsh treatment they received from him, and the slave Fanny, his concubine. They are half starved, forced to work till four o'clock on Sundays, and also on holidays. The children get no allowance of food or clothing, (even girls of eleven and twelve going naked,) and are marked with the bush rope with which Fanny flogs them. One boy eight or ten years of age, complains that she beats him, pulls him by the nose in a cruel manner, and pinches his ears most inhumanly. He gets no regular allowance, but lives on what he can get. His master makes him mind the horse, clean his shoes, burn the coffee, &c. &c.; never gives him any clothes, and when sick, after taking salts, makes him still perform his task. "This complainant proves by many old marks on his back and posteriors, that his statement is not at all incorrect, and that he has often been severely dealt with." (p. 17.)

A Sambo girl, Betsey, belonging to Mr. I. F. Obermuller, says, she was washing a frock given her by her mother, when her mistress took it from her. She told her mistress it was hard to take her frock from her, as she never gave her any clothes herself. Her mistress complained to her master that she was insolent. Her master flew into a passion, and kicked her on the belly, so that she could scarcely draw her breath. The next day her mistress tore her jacket off. She again alluded to the hardship it was to have her clothes taken from her, but

none given her. Mrs. — again complained of insolence, and master flogged her with a rope, and made her brother Jacob flog her. For the least trifle, she and her sister are locked up in the stocks, sometimes for three weeks, and fed only with two plantains a day. Her sister was locked up for a fortnight by her mistress, saying she had made the bed improper, thereby causing the child to fall. Her sister denied it. (p. 18.)

Four Negroes belonging to Cotton-tree Plantation, the property of the Hon. W. Katz, complain of not being allowed time for breakfast; that they have to go to the field before cock-crow, and work in it till gun fire, and then have to cut grass. They are confined in the stocks, and not allowed to go out, even for the calls of nature. They complained to Mr. Katz, and he flogged them. The charges are denied by the manager and overseer, the persons, in fact, who are accused; and on their denial, the Fiscal finds the complaint unfounded, and orders three of the complainants to be punished with seventy-five lashes, and one with fifty, in his own presence, in the market place. (p. 19.)

There are complaints also against Mr. Katz, from his estate of Philadelphia. *Amsterdam* (p. 46.) says, the overseer "Davies is extremely hard against him, beating him on every trifling occasion.

"Gave him last Monday twenty-five rods of a dam, and as he was no table to complete this, Davies flogged him very much; after flogging he told him that he would go to complain, which brought Davies to such a passion that he sent all the Negroes after him to catch him, but he escaped, and came to town to complain. Says they get enough to eat, but no time, on account of Davies's heavy tasks, to prepare the same. Complainant, on showing his posteriors, proves to have had of late a severe flogging." (p. 46.)

*Murphy* came to the Fiscal to complain, instead of going to Mr. Katz; because three Negroes had gone to complain to Mr. Katz, and without sending for the manager, they were flogged and sent back, and the next day one of them was flogged again by the manager (p. 58.)

May, 27 1810.

Seven Negroes belonging to plantation Rose Hall, state as follows:—

"That they all were engaged by the manager to gin cotton for himself on their Sundays, for which he promised each three guilders a day; when after working three Sundays, and receiving no payment, they declined to continue with this work. On demanding the payment, the manager called the driver to give them a d—d good payment.

"That they are obliged to bring every evening, after their work, an uncommonly large sized bundle of grass (the measure whereof the deponent deposits herewith,) and that when the measure is not full, they are obliged to search for more grass in the dark.

"That in telling his master the hardness of the service, he flew into such a passion that he broke one of his (complainant's) teeth. That in coming into the Negro houses at night after their work, and inquiring after their things, the manager, when hearing this, takes them up directly and lodges them in the stocks; adding further, that in case they are not satisfied with him, they may go and complain where they please." (p. 20.)



Mr. Grade, the manager of l'Esperance, is charged by the slaves with various delinquencies. A pregnant woman, named Ross, was employed picking coffee with some other women. Thinking they did not pick enough, or well, Mr. Grade ordered the driver Zondag to flog them. The driver did so. Rosa had previously objected to working, as being too big, and being unable to stoop; but the manager overruled the objection, and she went to pick coffee on her knees. When Zondag came to her, he said to the manager, This woman is big with child. The manager replied, "Give it to her till the blood flies out." She was flogged with the whip doubled. This was on a Friday. She was sent to the field on Saturday, but, being seized with pains in her loins, was sent to the hospital. The doctor examined her, and ordered her to the field again. On Sunday she was delivered of a dead child, after a severe labour. The child's arm was broken, and one eye was bruised and sunk in the head. This woman had had seven children before by one husband. The driver, Zondag, and several others, confirmed the above statement. The driver being particularly asked, whether on his representing that Rosa was pregnant, the manager had used the expression, "Never mind, flog her till the blood comes," replied, "Yes." (pp. 25—27.)

A Negro woman, named Laura, belonging to plantation Reliance, with a very young child at the breast, complains that she is not allowed to take her child to the field to give it the breast now and then, but is obliged to leave it with an old woman at home. When she steals from her work to the child, and is discovered, the manager flogs her. She brought this child into the world with great pain; it is of a weakly constitution, and requires a mother's care, which she is not allowed to bestow. The manager does not deny any of the above facts, only says, that *the women with young children are not required to come out till half-past six in the morning, and they quit the field at half-past ten, return to the field at half-past one, and leave it at half-past five.*

The complaints are more frequent from Sandvoot, formerly one of the crown estates, than from any other plantation. "Carolus says, he is sick and swelling, and that he cannot work, though willing. When he complains of sickness, the manager licks him, instead of helping him. Yesterday he was twice licked." (p. 33.)—"Amsterdam says, he is afflicted with pains in his bones; he does his best, but cannot work as others who are healthy. Mr. Cameron licks him with a horse whip, curses him, and when he goes to the hospital drives him away." (p. 34.)—"Mietje (and her child Mars.) "She says she is willing to work when healthy. She went yesterday sick to the hospital. Instead of getting physic, she received a flogging. She is still sick, and has come to complain." (p. 35.)—"Lambert had a bad disease, and the manager would give him nothing. He ran away. His master, Mr. Cameron, states him to be a bad subject. He is admitted to labour under disease, but is directed by the fiscal to be punished." (p. 55. See also pp. 57, 59, 65, 75, 76, 77.)

The complaints are also frequent from plantation Beerensteen, where some of the Crown Negroes are placed, against the driver Zealand, but chiefly against the manager, Mr. Deussen. (pp. 21, 25, 31, 36, 40, 43.)

*Samuel* complains against his master Spangenburg, that the Negroes danced during the Christmas holidays from Sunday evening till Tuesday night. He proceeds thus:—

"On Wednesday we went to work, but as some of the people were still inebriated, so the large task given them was not finished; the next day their task was renewed, with the addition of the remainder of the preceding day; that being acting as driver, told his master it was impossible to finish the same day. Samuel himself being accustomed to the field work, could not accomplish it, much less the women; but his master, who knows very little of Negro work and treatment, insisted on the performance of the task given; consequently the task was not finished, and principally the women were short in this; the next day they (himself as a driver included) were all flogged; the number of people working in the field consists of four men and three women, and they are so overwrought by their cruel master that they are scarcely able to keep it out, which is the cause of their coming to complain, his master saying that he has no text of fiscal or any one else, but that he will flog them when he finds it proper. The Negroes at present in town with their master, if called, would attest this. They get nothing but a small piece of pork, a little fish, two pipes, and some tobacco; nothing else; no clothes or any thing more; they get also a week only a small bunch of plantains, and are generally very indifferently treated by their master. Wishes as his master is a person who is always flogging them, and who knows nothing of the work, that he, with his wife and brother, might be sold being assured that they would be able to please a reasonable master, who understands the working and treatment of slaves." (p. 37.)

*Quamino* complains of his master, F. Brittlebank's general ill treatment.

"Says, that some time ago many of them came to the ferry with the intention of going to town to complain, but were prevented by the ferrymen from crossing the Canje Creek; that the fiscal then came to the ferry and ordered three of them to be flogged, amongst which the complainant was one; that after flogging, the fiscal desired his master to dress his wounds well; but that, on the contrary, his master did nothing to them when he came home, but rubbed his back with brine and salt; that in consequence he has suffered very much by this neglect." (p. 37.)

*Scipio* complains against the same master, Brittlebank, of being overwrought and severely treated.

"Came some time ago to complain, but was taken up at Jeffery's estate and confined there in the stocks for fourteen days: when he went home he got very severely flogged; he was taken to the water side and there flogged for fear of the whip being heard; his private parts, which he exhibits, are so severely wounded by the whip he can scarcely sit or stand. The Negro appears much emaciated." (p. 57.)

*Martin* complains against Mr. Davies, manager of Sandvoort—

"That on Saturday he was almost unable, through pain in his neck, to finish his work, but nevertheless completed it; that last Monday he

went in the morning early to complain to Mr. Davies to give him physic; that Mr. D. instead of assisting him, ordered Billy of Sandvoort the driver, with four other Negroes, to lay him down; that although he told Mr. D. he was never unwilling to work when well, he was, notwithstanding, flogged." (p. 39.)

*Philip and Leander* complain of Mr. Luyken, the manager of Berdingdighheid, killing all their hogs. Leander had ten killed at one time. For complaining they were put in the stocks. (p. 45.)

*Jenny* complains of her mistress, Elizabeth Atkinson, that *she beats her unmercifully, kicked and trampled on her belly, locked her in the stocks, and beat her on the back. In half an hour she miscarried.* Her child Philip is extremely ill treated, and is never allowed to come near her. *The child is exhibited: marks of severe flogging over the whole body.* Says she receives a good allowance." (pp. 45, 46.)

Three Negroes come to complain of Mr. Calmer, of plantation Niëw Stoop. One of them says,

"That it is now the third time he has come to complain: that twice he has been flogged by the fiscal at the market; that he told the fiscal the last time he went, that in case his master troubled him again he would then come to complain also; that Mr. Calmer, the last time he brought him home, flogged and kept him in the stocks during three weeks; after which, on applying to his master for relief, instead of gaining it, was severely flogged the next morning, and locked up in the stocks again; after having been there a long time, he was severely attacked by the scurvy, and although he begged hard to be allowed to go out and wash himself, was refused: he grew so ill, that his master was afraid of losing him, and therefore released him; he recovered, although very visible marks remain on his back: whilst in the stocks, his master gave him nothing to eat; whatever he got was by favour of the Negroes; he was not allowed to go out and ease himself, but lived in such a manner that it was impossible for any person to come near him; his master bought a chain and block at plantation Zuidwyk merely for him." (pp. 46, 47.)

General Murray, the late governor of Demerara, well known by the share he had in the prosecution of Smith, the Missionary, has two estates in Berbice, Resolution and Busses Lust. On the 23d October, 1821, the manager of the former estate, Hopkins, was reproved by the fiscal for having given three successive floggings to a Negro named *Mark*, who states,—

"He has been flogged severely by the manager, on account of complaining he was sick, three different times; once 12, another time 39, and again 25 lashes have been inflicted; shows marks of severe flogging, and much neglected." (p. 49.)

On the 29th of November there is another complaint from the same estate. Michael says he is a Negro, and knows well he must work; but that they work from morning till late in the evening picking coffee. "and when he comes home, between six and seven in the evening, instead of going home to get some victuals, he is ordered to work till twelve at night, bringing mud from one place to another. Also on

Sundays they are ordered to work, and if they should refuse they would be flogged. *Philip* makes a similar complaint.—*Thomas*

"Says he is an old man, and the work that the manager gives him to do is impossible for him to complete, from the weakness of his body and state, for which he is always punished, and kept continually in the stocks." (p. 50.)

The result of the complaints made to the fiscal is seldom given. In this instance it is given in very laconic terms, and will doubtless surprise our readers: "*Two directed to receive SEVENTY-FIVE lashes.*"

Again, on the 17th November, 1823, at the very time when Smith's trial was proceeding, we have a complaint from ten *women* belonging to the same plantation.

"The governor, our master, when he purchased us, gave us a task, one hundred trees to be weeded and cleansed; with this we were satisfied—the manager, however, says this is no work, we shall not have task-work; he gives each Negro, a row of three trees; if we do not finish the work given us, we are made to do it on Sunday; *Ziemone, Maria*, and others wrought in the field on Sunday; the manager had the driver locked up in the stocks." (p. 66.)

"We are content and happy when our master comes, who talks and laughs with us; but as soon as he goes off the estate we are unhappy."

"We have no time to eat, none to cook; we have no eleven o'clock; we are not wrought by task. Our master gave us spoons; the manager is dissatisfied with this; he says, the governor is too good, he minds us as if we were children; he says he cannot flog us, because that can be seen, but he will punish us with work. If any of the women be pregnant, no attention is paid to them; they are wrought as hard as the others; for that reason there are no children; manager says *he does not come to mind children*. The rows given us have each sixty trees; the bell is rung, but we cannot leave the field, because if the work given us be not finished, we are punished; the punishment is, we are to finish our work on Sunday. We all have wrought on Sunday; not one Sunday, but every one that any field work is left undone." (p. 66.)

On the 4th of September, 1823, a number of women, belonging to plantation Prospect, came to complain of bad treatment. The manager, Paterson, overworks them and gives them no time to eat. "We are now planting and supplying canes. The ground is so dry we are obliged to throw water on the beds before we can chop the earth." The work they had done the day before was reported to the manager at noon by the driver. The manager was unable to go himself from indisposition; but he ordered the driver, when they returned to the field at one o'clock, to go out and flog each of the strong women. The women expostulated with him, shewing him the extreme hardness of the ground, which they had to moisten before they could dig it; observing, that if the cane plant were not well put in, the manager would again order them to be punished for that. The overseer, coming up at the time, repeated the manager's order, and six of them were laid down, and punished with twelve lashes each. They proceed: "We are too much punished; we have no time to get our victuals; we have

every night got work, whether the mill is going or not. Sunday night even is not excepted, when we must bring firewood from the canal mouth. Tuesday night we had to carry corn from the great house to the horse stable-loft. We were employed at this work till near morning. We carry home wood on Sunday night as well as any other, and the boatmen are employed in bringing wood on Sunday as on any other day. If any of us go out on Sunday we must be back in time to bring home grass and firewood for the kitchen. After that we must still go to the canal for firewood for the engine.

"Mr. Ross sends two bunches of plantains for each Negro every week: one week the men get two bunches, and the women one; next week we get two, and the men one; the rest are kept for sheep and hogs. Mr. Ross sends tobacco; we get none of that; we get no molasses, although it is given to the horses, sheep, and hogs. If you are sick, or have a sore, and put in the sick-house, only one bunch of plantains is allowed, and the allowance of fish is stopped. Mr. Ross sends every thing to the estate very well, but we do not get it. The overseer's treatment is worse than the manager's; since Caajee is come home, she is confined both legs in the stocks every night. Only four of us are allowed to take the magass from the engine; in M'Cermot's time there were five of us to do this work. Our run has been stopped for the week. Last night we received orders from the driver that we were not to come home to-day unless we finished our work; we must boil plantains then for to-day; the ground is so hard we knew we could not do it, and therefore we came to complain." (p. 60.)

It appeared on farther inquiry, that they were well supplied with either plantains, or rice, or corn; but no other part of the charges meets with a denial. The conclusion of the whole is thus given, and it will illustrate the nature of the protection which Negroes receive under harsh usage. Mr. Ross, the attorney, who was present,

"Expressed to the manager his entire dissatisfaction of the women having been flogged prematurely, and at the Negroes being employed on Sunday night; and promised the Negroes they should have redress in as far as their complaints were grounded, but expressed his disapprobation of their not having sought redress from him as the attorney of the estate, instead of seeking it from the fiscal; and this conduct having been also pointed out by the fiscal, as a want of proper respect to their master, who from their own account plentifully supplied their wants, they seemed to regret the measure they had adopted." (p. 69.)

Whether this be the same Mr. Ross who is proprietor of Calcaim plantation, we know not; but the Negroes of that plantation also make bitter complaints against their manager.

"When the sun is down, if our row is not finished we get flogged. I received thirty lashes, so did Joe. We are taken to the stocks at night, and flogged next morning. We told the manager the work was too much, that we had no time to get our victuals, and begged him to lessen the task; this was the reason we were flogged. There are plenty of plantains on the estate; the manager, however, only gives us one bunch, and that is on the Sunday morning. We are very well sup-

plied with fish. We are obliged to boil our plantains at night, and put them in a calabash to take to the field next morning; we are obliged to eat them by stealth, we are driven so hard; and before we can eat them they turn sour. When we come from the field, after this heavy day's work, we must work in the yard: the punt brings wood to the canal, and we must carry it up to the engine; other times we must haul up bullet-tree to the sawpit. When we are grinding we know very well we must sit up late; and of this we do not complain, knowing it must be done. We have complained to our master, and he says that the manager, he supposes, troubles us because we don't mind our work; we had no redress from him." (p. 57.)

These heavy complaints are referred by the fiscal, on account of the distance of the plantation, to Capt. Grant, a burgher officer. His letter of instructions on the occasion will throw no small light on the principles on which justice is administered to complaining slaves. After stating the heads of complaint, he observes—

"It must be needless for me to request the most impartial investigation; and *although I am perfectly satisfied that Mr. Ross would not permit his slaves to be oppressed by the manager, yet some of the charges of complaints may require redress*; and in such case I certainly shall recommend Mr. Ross to afford instant relief. *I am also well aware and fully confident that such recommendation would be needless* if the complainants had not lost sight of a duty incumbent on them, to have sought redress in the first instance from Mr. Ross, their proprietor, which they had ample opportunities of doing by his frequent visits to the estate."

"If, however, you find that the complaints are groundless, I request you will, by every means, endeavour to convince them of the same, to point out, how very unsatisfactory, unpleasant and expensive such complaints must be to a proprietor of respectability and a good owner of slaves; and that although the complaints of slaves shall always command my ready and serious attention, and that whenever they are aggrieved I will exert myself to afford them relief, yet that the duty is no less imperious on me to punish such slaves, whose only motives in quitting their estates to prefer complaints proceed from idle and wanton dispositions, whose statements prove to be groundless and vexatious.

"*I would recommend you to direct the said Negroes to be exemplarily punished in presence of the gang; and one of them having asserted that* *was the one that induced them to come to town to complain, he ought to receive fifty lashes, and the others thirty-nine each, well applied, and cautioned to refrain from further wanton behaviour, on pain of more severe punishment.*

"I also recommend you to request Mr. Austin† the manager of 49, to accompany you, and afford you his aid and opinion in ascertaining the work done on the estate, and complained of." (p. 58.)

\* The Negroes distinctly say they had complained to Mr. Ross, and were refused redress.

† Of this Mr. Austin, whom they made Captain Grant's assessor, and in whom they had reposed so much confidence, we have several notices in these papers.

The plantation Profit, in Dr. Pincard's time, was a model of humanity towards the slaves. Times are now changed. The former possessor no longer lives, and the slaves are in the hands of sequestrators. The following is a specimen of their grievances :

"Hutchinson, the manager, is too cross: that he will not give task-work, but works them by the day to that degree that they have no time to get their breakfast; he comes after 11 o'clock in the field, and says we do not work enough; the driver must give us twenty-five lashes every day. If we are flogged, we go to the burgher officer to complain; he gives us a letter to the manager; but he says, I want no letter, and the complainant is laid down and flogged: two of the Negroes have letters they received from the burgh officer, which were given them by the manager after being flogged. We have no attorney, or at least we hear of none, and we have not seen one for five months; there is no fish nor salt on the estate; we have not had clothes, this makes the third year, nor have we pipes or tobacco; we make plenty of rum, but never get a glass of it; if we feel our skin hurt us, and complain of sickness, we are flogged; he then mixes salts, jalap, and calomel together, which is given to drink. Rose went to say she was sick; she was flogged with the whip, and is yet cut. The manager says we are making bargain; we do not know what he means; he makes us think

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—*Bobs* says, "That almost three weeks ago, the manager Austin met him in the morning whilst going to the field, and without giving him the least provocation called the driver King to lick him, which had been of such a nature, that he had been obliged to lay down some days, and on recovery thought proper to report this proceeding to his Honour the fiscal. Complainant's back has yet the visible marks of this treatment." (p. 31.)

*Trim* says, "That he knows very well that a Negro is to work, he does his duty, but cannot please the manager, Mr. Austin; that the driver is continually finding fault with and licking him too much; that when complaining about this to the manager he gets for answer, 'It is your master's work;' says, that when Negroes are sick and go to the manager, instead of giving them physic, he drives them away with a horse-whip." (p. 41.)

*Rose* says, "She lost her husband and child lately; that the manager treats her very ill; that the child whereof she was delivered died on the third day; that the manager made her go to work too soon after her delivery; that he locked her up at night in the stocks, and made her work in the day; that she told Mr. Kewley, her master, repeatedly of the several ill treatments which she received from Mr. Austin; but as Mr. Kewley gives her no assistance, she is obliged to come and complain." (p. 41.)

Again, Aug. 10, 1823, "Complaint of the Negro *Harry*, belonging to J. P. Chapman, of Demerara, hired to Mr. Kewley, proprietor of 49, Corantyn Coast:—States, that he is perfectly able to do his work, but not when he is sick; that he went to the manager to say he was sick; he made the watchman take me to the field, where I was flogged by the driver. I had the fever two days; I went to complain; I was put in the dog-house, where I neither ate nor drank; there is no sick-house on 49; I could not eat nor drink from sickness. If a Negro says he is sick, two Negroes drive him to the field at five o'clock; at night we are locked up: all the Negroes treated so. Some of the Negroes, from the bad treatment of the manager, have run away. One of Mr. Chapman's Negroes was flogged so often, and had so bad a foot, that he was obliged to run away in the bush; if he is dead or alive we do not know; he was one of the firemen; and walked on his hands and feet; he told the manager he could not stand to do work; he was laid down and flogged. Manager's name Austin." *Harry* is ordered twelve lashes by the fiscal, on the statement of the proprietor, Mr. Kewley; which however, only goes to rebut a part, and an inferior part, of the charges.

upon what we don't want. Sandy shows some stripes upon his posteriors; he received them in the field from the driver by order of the overseer; he says it is for work, as we make a bargain not to work. Having made our complaint to the burgher officer, who never came to the estate, but gave us letters which were not attended to, and not knowing that we have any attorney or proprietor, we came to the Fiscal to complain. We do not wish to run away in the bush, but we look for help. The manager came in the field the other day after dinner; as soon as he came into the field, he laid the driver down and flogged him; next Sandy, and then me: I asked what I had done; but four Negroes were made to hold me, and I was flogged. I went to Mr. Munro to complain; he told me the manager could not have flogged me for nothing; I suppose you gave him sauce. He went next morning to the manager, who said I had been saucy. I was locked up in the stocks day and night; I think I was confined two weeks; manager said I should stop there till Christmas, because I went to complain to Munro; I asked leave to go out to ease myself, and made my escape; stocks are now full of people. Hannah has a severe cold, and complains of pain in the stomach; she says she is locked up in the stocks; the manager says if she dies, he does not lose *his* money; the Negroes went to complain to the fiscal, and he came on the estate, and what did he do? Rose said she had a pain in her side, and begged for a blister; the manager said he would give her a blister on her backside; she was laid down and flogged, the marks still visible." (p. 64.)

The Negroes of Plantation Foulis complain of Dr. Munro, their owner, that they are made to work in the boiling house from eleven or twelve o'clock at night, till eight or nine the next evening. They complain also of want of food. The fiscal proceeded to the estate, where he says he ascertained that the complaints were *in a great measure* groundless, but that *some* irregularities were chargeable on the overseers, who were admonished, and threatened with dismissal if they were not more attentive in future.

- Two of the complainants, who, it was proved, were guilty of insolence and disobedience of orders, were punished in presence of the whole gang, who were informed that any real grievance they had to complain of would be always attended to, but that they would be severely punished whenever their conduct was proved to be refractory and disorderly. A copy of the ordinance respecting the clothing and feeding of Negroes was then handed to Mr. Munro, who was informed that penalties would be rigidly enforced if the enactments were not strictly complied with." (pp. 6, 7.)

Sixteen Negroes, of plantation Herstelling, all unite in complaining that the manager

- Turns the gang out in the morning a long time before the gun fires at the fort, and at day-light all the gang are at their work. At breakfast time, when the bell rings, before the Negroes are able to put their victuals on their re, the bell rings again to turn out; so that most of the Negroes go in the field again without breakfast. He states, that the manager gives them more work than they are able to do; and if the work is not done in time, the whole gang are flogged. That their al-



lowance only consists of one bunch of plantains, and a little fish every week, and no more. He states, that when all the gang are at work, and two or three of them have not finished their task, for the sake of these two or three people the whole gang are flogged; this happens almost every day in the week."

The head driver, being examined, states,

"That on Thursday last he had a gang of sixteen men with him, weeding young canes in a field about 500 rods from the buildings. That the whole gang were at their work, and had got three beds weeded before the sun rose. An overseer, Michael Harrold, came to the field at seven o'clock, reckoned the gang, and directed the driver to see the work was properly done. About an hour after the manager came to the field, and ordered the driver to flog the whole gang, with the exception of one man, Alexander, as the work was not going on properly."

"On inquiring into the truth of this statement, in the presence of the attorneys of the estate, it appeared, that although the manager's conduct was, *in some measure* reprehensible, yet the complainants had greatly exaggerated their grievances. They were therefore ordered to return home, on the attorneys promising to go to the estate the next day to see that every real cause of complaint was remedied; and to warn the manager, that if the Negroes had reason to complain again, he would be immediately discharged." (p. 72.)

On the 3d of March, 1823, nine Negroes, all women, belonging to plantation Port Morant, appeared to complain of the manager, that they are "constantly in the field from morning before gun-fire until late in the evening; that the work the manager gives is too much; they are unable to complete it, although they work during breakfast time."

"Sometimes they are obliged to work on Sunday to finish the task given during the week; and often have no time to eat, from morning till night; if the row is not finished they are put in the stocks, and kept in until morning, when they are released and sent to work; sometimes the whole of the women are flogged for the sake of two or three not finishing their task. Last Friday the driver was flogged on account of his having allowed the women to come to the house to get breakfast, and they were sent all back to their work; the manager saying to them, that they had time to eat at night, and not in the day. On Saturday last the manager went to the field, and found that they had not finished their row, and immediately ordered four women to be flogged." (pp. 78, 79.)

"On investigation of this complaint," observes the fiscal, who, be it remembered, is himself a planter, "it appeared,

"That although the tasks given to the Negroes of the estate were not actually more than they could do in a day, yet that the manager was very severe upon them, and too frequently inflicted punishment without sufficient cause: he was therefore informed that his conduct would be vigilantly looked after in future; and if he continued the same system, the attorney of the estate would be recommended to discharge him from the management." (p. 79.)

Such was the result of these acknowledged atrocities.

The following complaint, from the same estate, was heard on the 27th March, 1823, and the result will further illustrate the course of judicial proceedings in the slave colonies.

- *Ness* states, That he is the driver over the women, and the manager asked him last Sunday why he did not go to work, and he answered that he had not been ordered to do so, or he would have gone to work, as he did not wish to do any thing without the manager's order. The manager then offered to flog him; but he made his escape, and came to your Honour for redress.

- *The complainant in this instance was punished by the acting fiscal for having left the estate and come to town to complain without any cause, and when he knew he had been guilty of disobedience of orders and neglect of duty; and the manager was warned of the impropriety and illegality of working the Negroes on Sunday.*" (p.79)

The manager is not punished for so flagrant a breach of the law, but warned of its impropriety! The poor Negro is punished!

But we have done, not because our materials are exhausted, but because we have already swelled this Number of our work to an inconvenient size.\* Last year Mr. Baring facetiously observed, that "what might be called our stock stories" were worn threadbare. He was tired to hear of nothing but Huggins and Carty, and Kitty and Thisbe: they were repeated in every speech and pamphlet, till they were fairly worn out, proving also the absence of any new facts of the same kind. The fresh importation, of which we have given a specimen, will prevent, in the next session of Parliament, the offence to good taste of which Mr. Baring so sensitively complains. His commerce connects him with Berbice, the scene of these atrocities; and yet Mr. Baring, with all his assumed knowledge of the subject, was as ignorant of these transactions as the child unborn; and would have been perfectly incredulous of them, had they to come, not from the fiscal of Berbice, himself a planter, but from some of those persons whom he unfairly and ungenerously represents as fabricating such stories in order to curry favour with their employers. He complains too of the assiduity with which petitions are got up on this subject. And does he suppose that such transactions as these, when they come to be known, will not rouse the public to petition? The people of Great Britain cannot remain unaffected by such enormities perpetrated on their helpless fellow-subjects; nor can they continue to tolerate those fiscal regulations by which they are made to pay, in bounties and protecting duties, for the cost of this bloody and murderous system.

• We have given only a tithe of the atrocities brought before the fiscal of the small colony of Berbice, containing about 20,000 slaves! What a mass of horrors should we have had before us, could we have had a similar return from all our colonies, containing altogether upwards of 40 times that number! Only three, however, of these colonies have fiscals, or any analogous officers, to record in any manner, however imperfect, such transactions.

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*This, and all other publications of the Society, may be had at their office, 18, Alderman-bury, or at Messrs. Hatchards, 187, Piccadilly, and Trevelyan's, Cornhill. They may also be procured through any bookseller, or at the depots of the Anti-Slavery Society throughout the kingdom.*



